

ROUNDWOOD STEVENAGE

Design and Access Statement

November 2024

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Purpose of the document



This document has been prepared by Croudace Homes to illustrate our design approach for the proposed neighbourhood at this unique site on the northern edge of Stevenage to the west of Great Ashby.

The following pages provide a synopsis of our analysis, review and design proposal for this detailed planning application for a residential development of 281 dwellings and associated roads, parking, realignment of Back Lane, drainage, landscaping, open space, servicing facilities and associated works.

Site Location

The site is located to the northern edge of Stevenage on land to the west of Great Ashby

The site is broadly rectangular in shape and is bounded by Back Lane to the eastern and southern boundaries which continues north to Weston and west to Graveley. The southern and eastern edges of Great Ashby, which is an existing residential development, abuts Back Lane; with Calder Way connecting with Back Lane to the southern boundary of the site. The western and northern boundaries are formed by a combination of tree and hedge lines with agricultural land beyond.

This submission is a detailed planning application for 'Residential development of 281 dwellings and associated roads, parking, realignment of Back Lane, drainage, landscaping, open space, servicing facilities and associated works'.

The extent of the site is illustrated opposite, which includes sections of Back Lane and is 11.43 hectares in size.

The site, known also as GA1, is an allocated housing site for 330 homes, located in the North Hertfordshire.



SITE ANALYSIS

Existing Site

The key aspects and existing characteristics of the site are described as follows.

The site edge to the north comprises a mixture of hedges, which are broken in places, with a section of Public Footpath 10 running parallel, east-west from Back Lane, with this hedge. There is woodland beyond the footpath which forms a treeline to the site and screens the agricultural land beyond.

The eastern boundary of the site is formed by Back Lane which has a largely continuous hedge with intermittent trees to the western side of this existing vehicular route. A mix of rear gardens and the frontages of homes are immediately beyond the landscape buffer and ditch to the eastern side of Back Lane. Haybluff Drive is located centrally and abuts the site boundary to the east. The buildings of the existing neighbourhood of Great Asbhy are largely between 2 and 3 storeys and form a backdrop to this edge.

The presence of built form continues along the southern boundary edge and is bisected by Calder Way where it joins with Back Lane. This edge of the site is characterised by clumps of broken tree lines, hedges and ditches.

To the west is the woodland of Round Wood itself forming approximately two thirds of the woodland edge along this boundary. Towards the northern end of this boundary is a more recently planted woodland which visually connects with the woodland to the north; with a large oak tree providing a visual focus for this corner and informal connection to Public Footpath 10.

The main body the site is essentially flat and has a subtle gently sloping gradient from the high point in the north-east corner to the low point in the south-west.



Photograph locations



A: View from Public Footpath 10 into the site with Great Ashby in the background



B: Public Footpath 10 looking east (site to the right)



C: Back Lane with Great Ashby through the tree to the east (site to the right)



D: Public Footpath 10 looking east (site to the left)



E: Existing connection to Mendip Way (Great Ashby)



F: View along Haybluff Drive towards the site



G: View of the junction of Calder Way with Back Lane



H: View along Back Lane from the Calder Way junction (site to the right)



I: View across the site from the western boundary towards Great Ashby



J: Existing Oak tree to the north-west corner of the site

WIDER SITE CONTEXT

Existing Site Connectivity

The site has excellent connectivity and the proposed design will seek to strengthen these linkages through the design of the layout.

As a starting point for our analysis, the diagram on this page illustrates the 5, 10 and 15 minute walking distances plotted on the wider context area.

The emerging and allocated housing sites at NS1, HO3 and GA2 have been included as these influence the role that the Roundwood site (GA1) plays in strengthening connections to the wider context.



- KEY:
- Application / Site Boundary
 - Walking Distance
 - Development Site (NS1)
 - Development Site (HO3)
 - Development Site (GA2)

Existing Pedestrian & Cyclist Routes

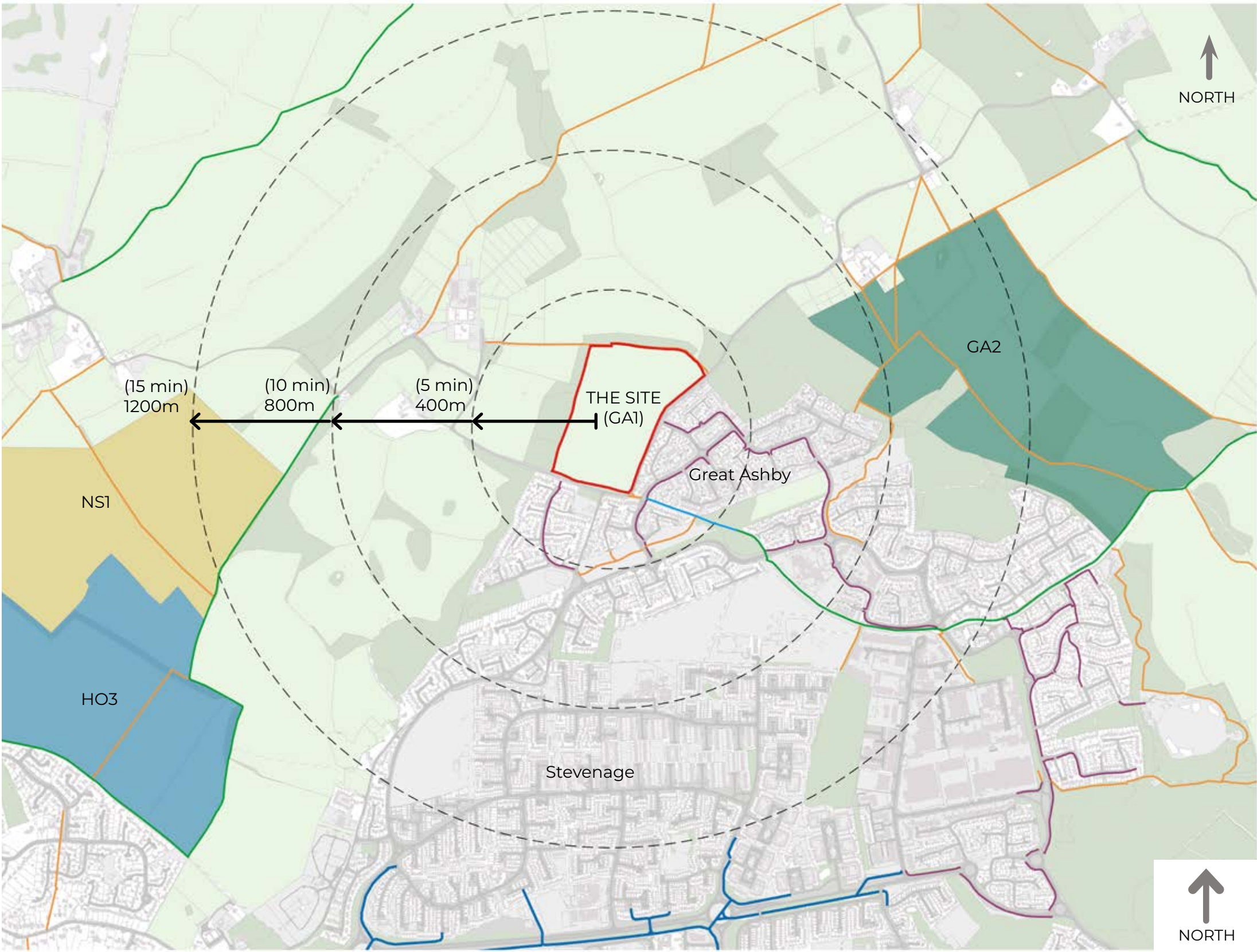
The site has excellent walking connectivity as follows:

- To the north from Public Footpath 10
- To the south-east corner from the estate footpath to Great Ashby forming Botany Bay Lane
- To the south-west corner via the existing pedestrian connection to the north of Orwell Avenue

These routes link with the wider and varied network of pedestrian and cyclist connections.

KEY:

- Application / Site Boundary
- Residential Estate Footpath
- Bridleway
- Public Footpath
- Roadway Footpath
- Formal Cycle route
- Development Site (NS1)
- Development Site (HO3)
- Development Site (GA2)



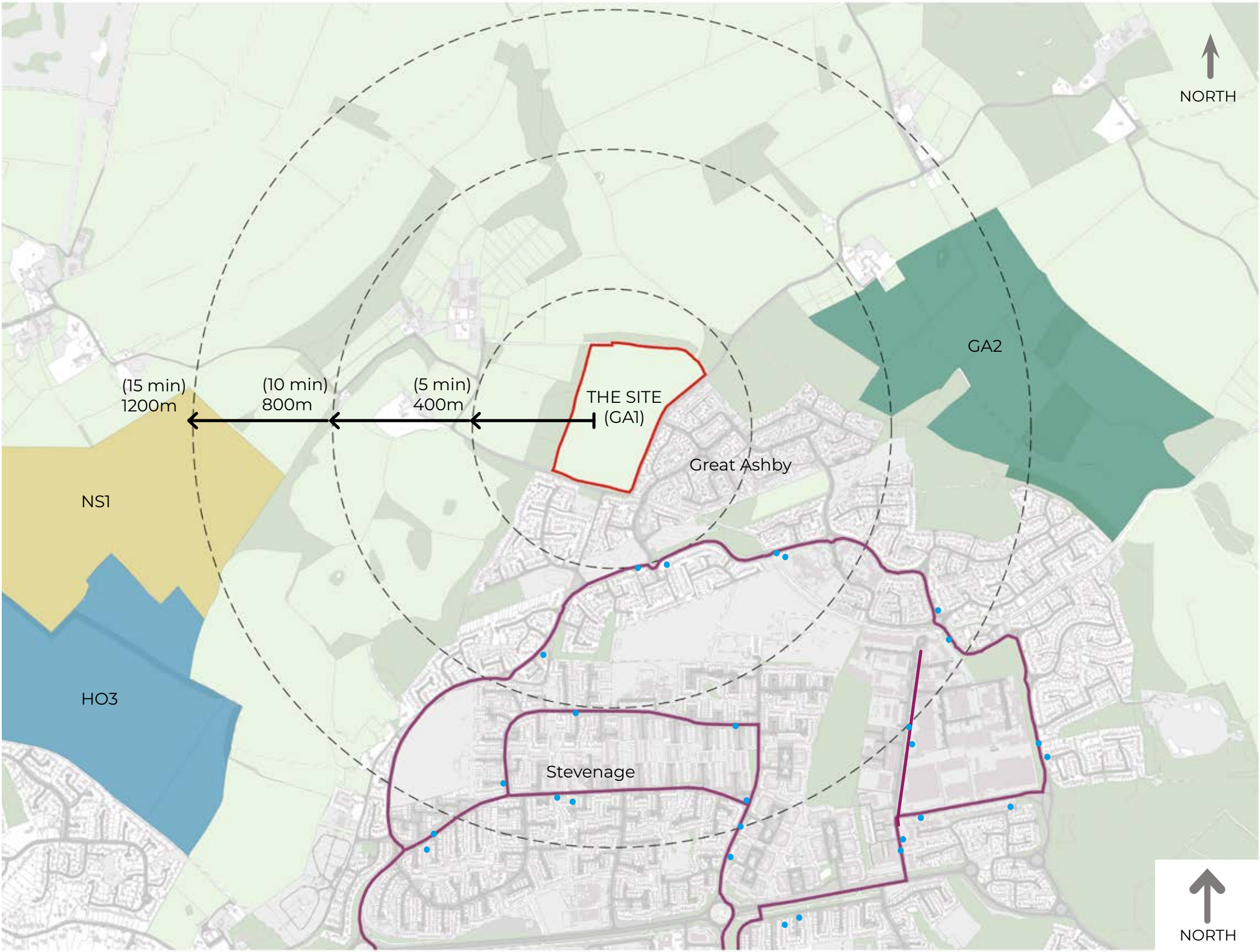
Existing Public Transport

There are existing bus stops located in close proximity to the site within a 5 minutes walk along Great Ashby Way.

These bus routes serve Round Diamond Primary School, the local centre at Great Ashby, Pin Green Industrial Area, Larkwood School, Bedwell Primary School, Asda Supermarket, Stevenage Town Centre and Stevenage Bus Station which is directly opposite Stevenage Railway Station which has services which connect to London, Peterborough and Cambridge as well as local towns at Hitchin and Letchworth Garden City.

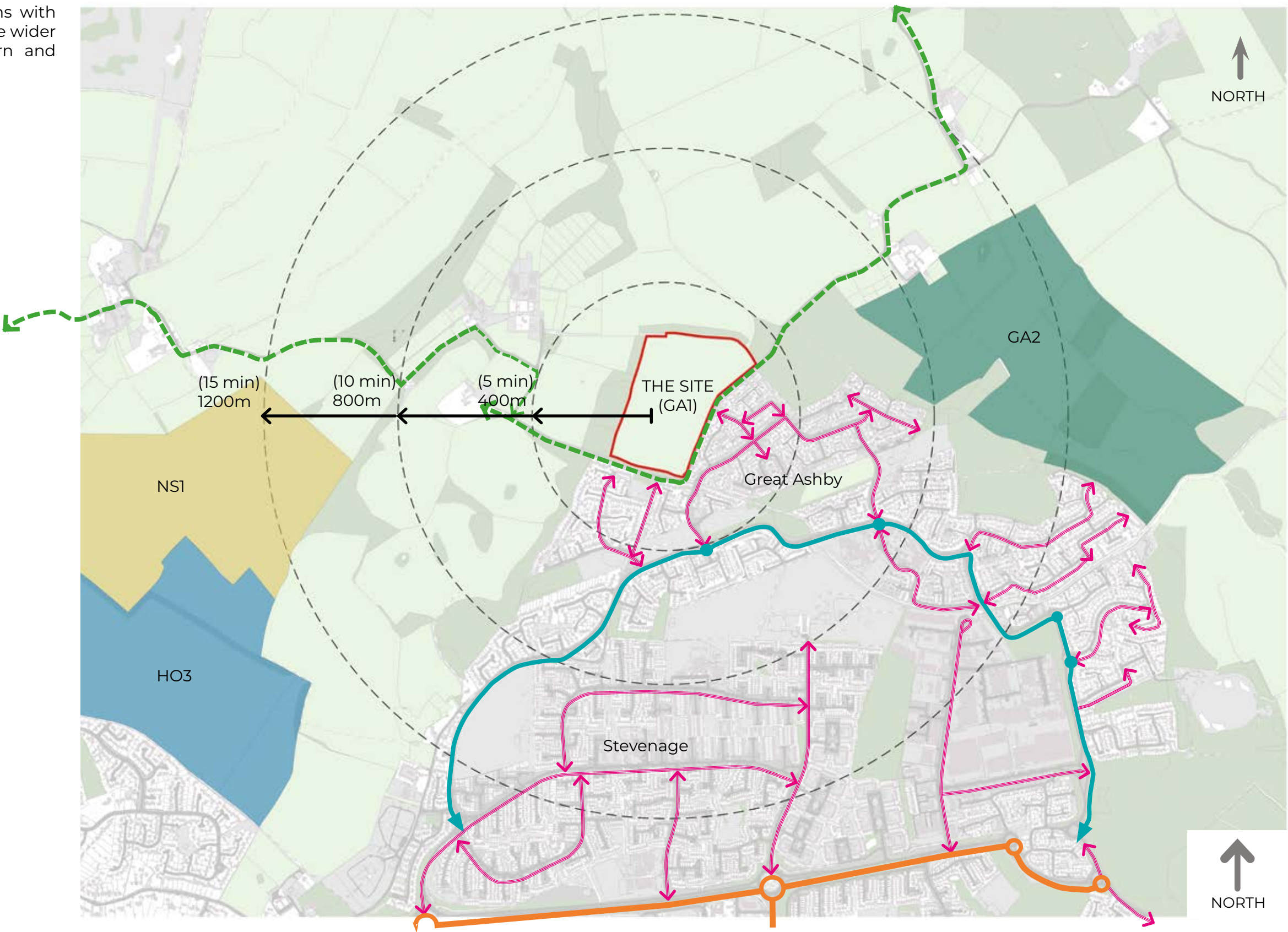
KEY:

- Application / Site Boundary
- Existing Bus Routes
- Existing Bus Stops
- Development Site (NS1)
- Development Site (HO3)
- Development Site (GA2)



Existing Road Links

The site has good vehicular connections with opportunities to connect the site with the wider context in particular along the eastern and southern boundaries.



Existing Local Amenities

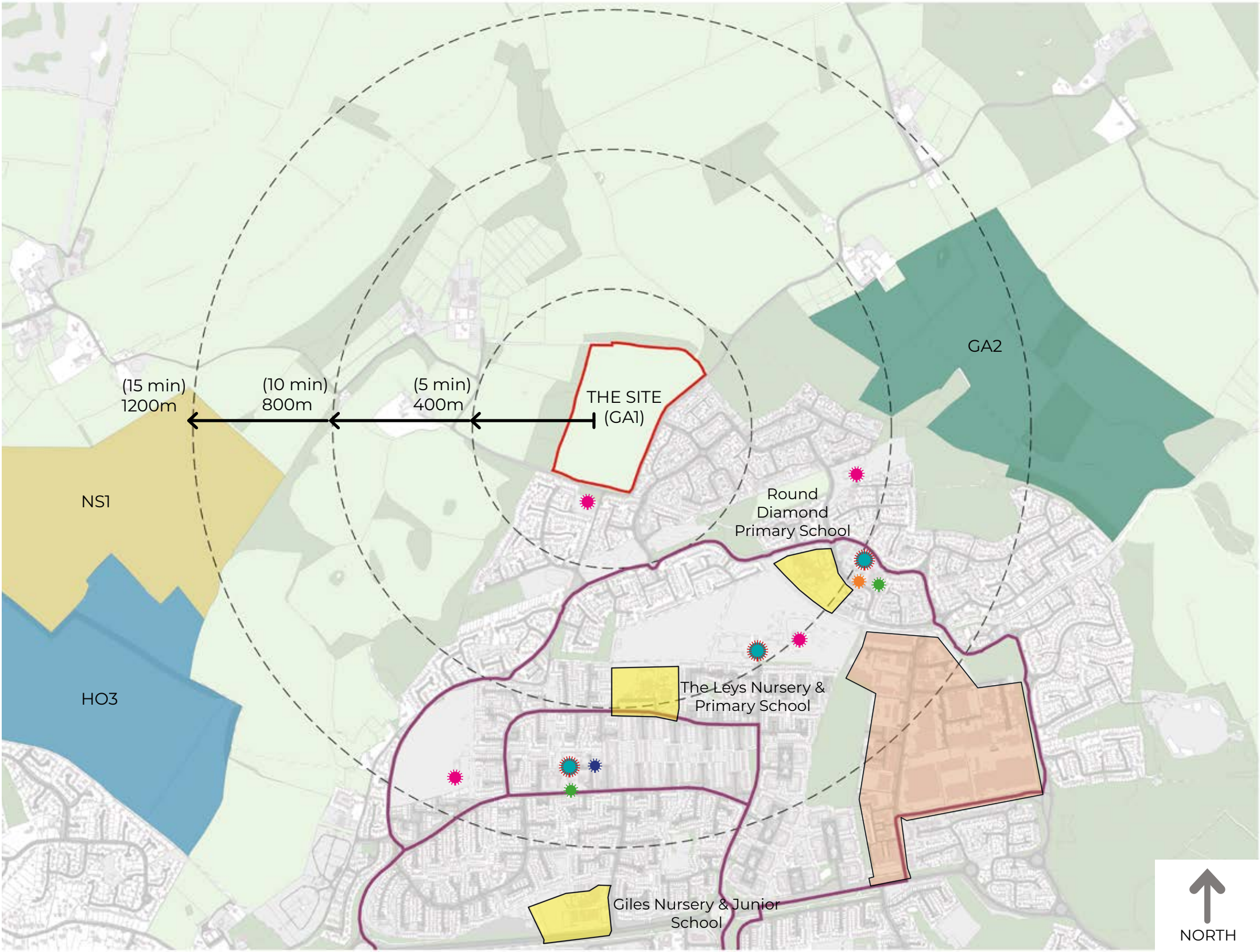
There are local schools within a 10 minute walking distance which can be accessed along the existing street footways and established pedestrian routes.

The local centre, serving Great Ashby, is within a 10 minute walk, as are Community Facilities and play spaces.

An employment cluster, at Pin Green Industrial Area is local to the site and can be accessed via public transport, cycling or walking.

KEY:

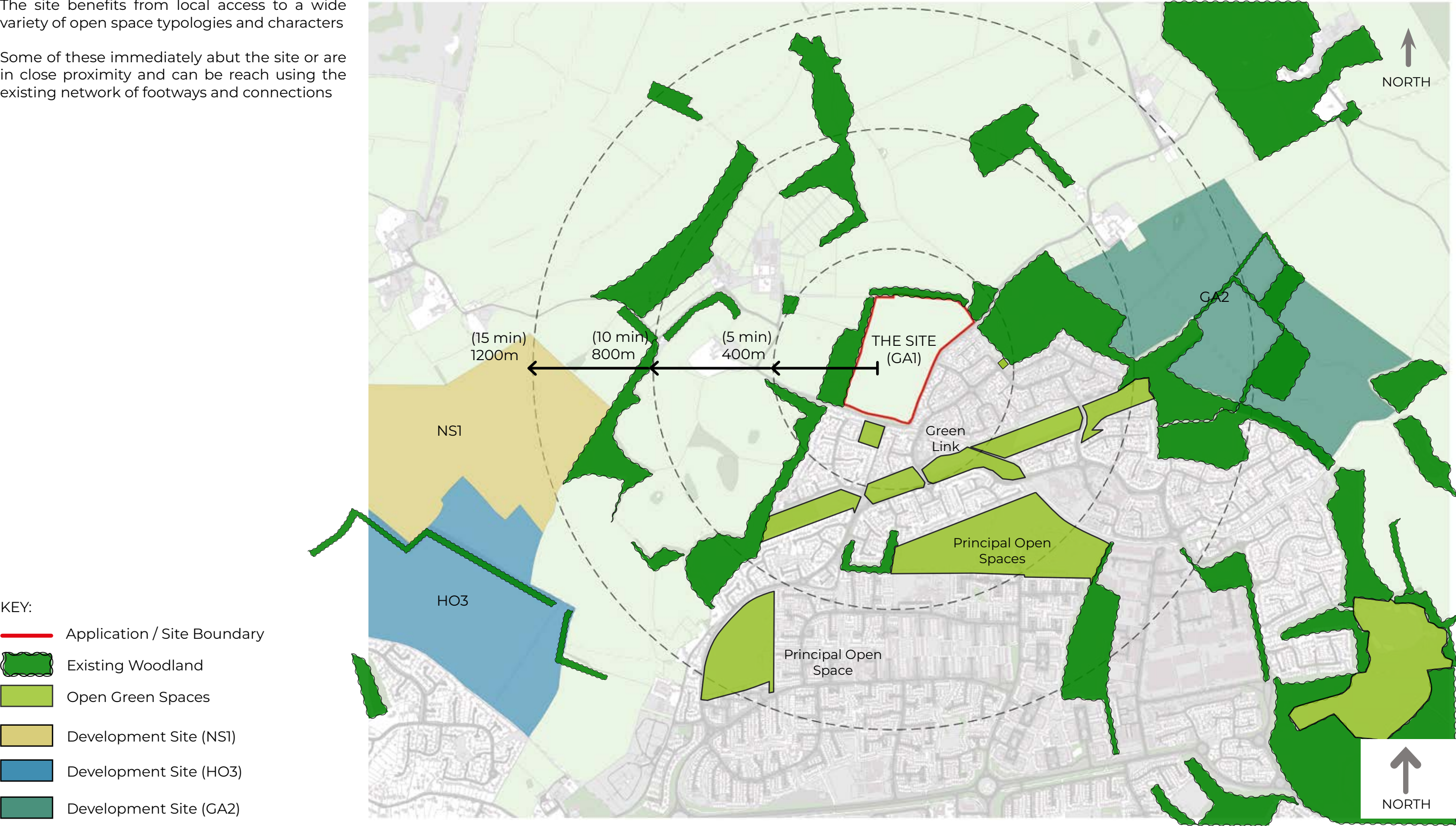
- Application / Site Boundary
- Schools
- Employment
- Community Facility
- Food Shops
- GP Surgery
- Play Areas
- Vets
- Development Site (NS1)
- Development Site (HO3)
- Development Site (GA2)



Existing Open Spaces

The site benefits from local access to a wide variety of open space typologies and characters

Some of these immediately about the site or are in close proximity and can be reach using the existing network of footways and connections



Existing Heritage Sites & Conservation Area

There are a small number of existing Conservation Areas in close proximity to the site which include buildings/structures of historic note.

KEY:

Application / Site Boundary

Graveley Conservation Area

St. Nicholas/ Rectory Lane Conservation Area

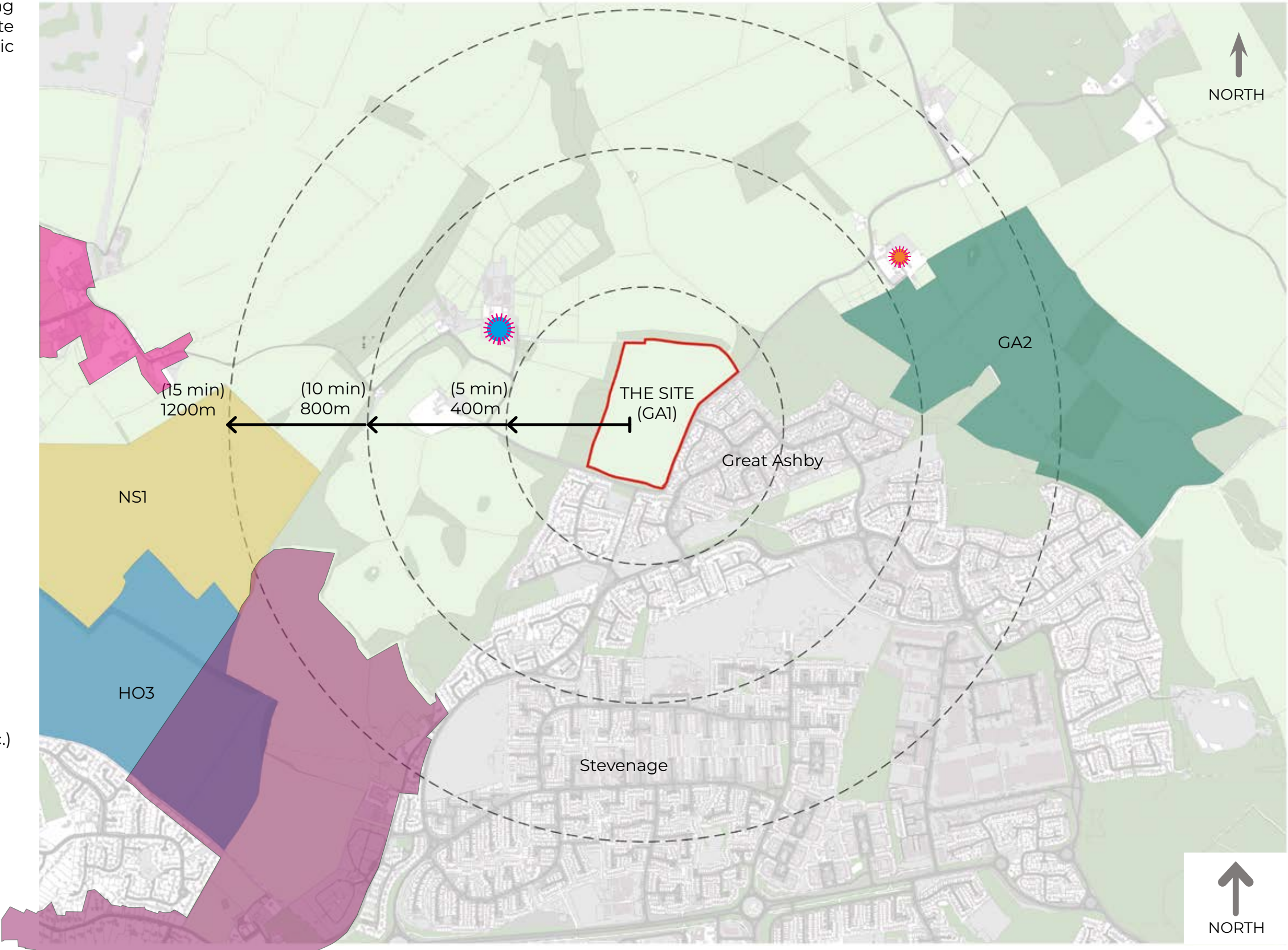
Cluster of Grade II Buildings
(Chesfield and Manor Farmhouse etc.)

Newbury Barn (Grade II)

Development Site (NS1)

Development Site (HO3)

Development Site (GA2)



SITE CHALLENGES

Existing Site Challenges

The site has a number of on-site and peripheral challenges which the proposed layout will seek to positively utilise, respect and where possible, seamlessly embed into the development. These are described on the following pages.



Existing Roads & Proposed Access Points



The following is of note:

- There is an existing road and vehicle circulation network associated with the Great Ashby neighbourhood
- Calder Way links with the site boundary connecting with Back Lane which runs along the eastern and southern site boundaries
- The 2023 detailed planning application (and other previous applications) proposed a access point connections from Haybluff Drive and Back Lane (via Calder Way)

KEY:

- Application / Site Boundary
- Proposed 2023 Application Access Points
- Direction of travel
- Vehicular road
- Residential Street

Existing Pedestrian and Cyclist Connections



The following is of note:

- Public Footpath 10 running immediately adjacent to the north boundary
- Established connecting along the Botany Bay Lane to the south-east corner
- Pedestrian only connection at Orwell Avenue to the south-west corner
- Existing roads to the Great Ashby neighbourhood suitable for commuter cycling with footways along the street including a network of shared surface streets and pedestrian only connections

KEY:

- Application / Site Boundary
- Existing Public Right of Way (PRoW) only
- Existing Pedestrian Connection
- Existing Road without Footway
- Existing Road with Footway
- Residential Estate footway / route (Botany Bay Way)
- Existing Shared Surface

Proposed Public Transport Connections



The following is of note:

- The proposal seeks to extend the existing bus route along Mendip Way to strengthen the connectivity of the site and this area of Great Ashby with accessible public transport

KEY:

- Application / Site Boundary
- Pedestrian/Cyclist Access Point
- Pedestrian Connections from Site to Proposed Bus Stop
- Indicative/Potential Extensions to Existing Bus Route
- Indicative/Potential proposed Bus Stop Location

Proposed Vehicular Access Arrangements



The following is of note:

- During the pre-application planning process feedback from the NHDC and the County Council determined that the vehicle accesses and the number of homes they serve should be split between Haybluff Drive and Calder Way/Back Lane
- A emergency access point will be provided between the two sections of the site

KEY:

- Application / Site Boundary
- Direction of Travel
- Homes served off Haybluff Drive
- Homes served off Calder Way/Back Lane
- Section of Back Lane to be re-purposed as pedestrian only route

Existing Open Space and Woodlands



The following is of note:

- The site benefits from a wide variety of open space typologies and characters all of which either abut or are in close proximity to the site; notably at Round Wood, the woodland to the upper western edge and along the northern boundary.
- The woodland at Parsons Green also contributes to the site
- There is a playspace forming part of the open space which is accessed via the existing residential development to the south off Orwell Avenue

KEY:

- Application / Site Boundary
- Existing Woodland
- Green Open Space

Landscape Buffers



The following is of note:

- There are 15m buffer offsets required to Roundwood and to a small section of the adjacent woodland to the north-east corner of the site
- 12m buffer offsets are required to the south and north boundaries and to the north-west section of the western boundary
- During the pre-application process it was agreed with NHDC that a 7m buffer would be sufficient to the eastern boundary

KEY:

- Application / Site Boundary
- Landscape buffer zone (from Tree Crown, vegetation or from site boundary if no vegetation)

Existing Topography



The following is of note:

- The site is gently sloping from the north-east corner to the south-west corner
- The highest point is to the north-east and the lowest point is to the North-West
- Gradients across the site are shallow and range from 1:90 to 1:200

KEY:



Application / Site Boundary

Direction of Slope

Surface Water Drainage Strategy



The following is of note:

- Infiltration to manage surface water run-off is not possible on site
- The surface water drainage strategy has been established as part of the 2023 planning application and is derived from the topography being formed by surface water conveyance swales which connection attenuation basins located to the south; these in-turn discharge into the existing Surface Water connection located off Orwell Avenue to the south

KEY:



Application / Site Boundary

Proposed Swale



Infiltration not possible. Therefore basins cannot be located at the highest points of the site

Proposed Basin



Connection to Existing Sewer

PROPOSED DESIGN

The Vision

The proposal for Roundwood will deliver a vibrant well connected new neighbourhood on the northern edge of Stevenage

To achieve our vision for the site, careful development of the detailed design seeks to preserve the aspirations and deliver the design philosophy of the initial design intent established at pre-application planning stage with the key elements of the scheme being as follows:

- Diverse, high quality homes across a tenure blind development providing much needed affordable and private homes
 - A permeable layout of walkable streets providing greater active travel connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists to the immediate and wider context
 - Rich and vibrant landscape buffers and green open spaces knitting together and visually connecting with the wider suburban and rural contexts
 - Creation of a visually attractive central Green Spine open spaces at the heart of the neighbourhood for all to use and enjoy
 - Utilising existing tree lines and strengthen existing hedges with new trees and planting to provide screening, yet filtering, of views towards the development from the surrounding edges
- Focal buildings at entrance
- A scheme layout that manages the transition from the existing town / suburban edge to village / rural village edge through careful and considered placement of building mass, heights, housing typologies and landscape treatments
 - A carefully crafted design aesthetic that acknowledges and embeds the best of the local traditional vernacular into the design of the new homes

Sitewide Opportunities

The nature, location, the potential to create active travel linkages and the opportunity for residents to live by and have a view of green open space are all excellent characteristics presented by the existing site and which the development proposal seeks to embrace and enhance.

- KEY:
-  Existing trees / hedgerows which screen / filter views to the development
 -  Existing focal mature tree
 -  Strengthen existing landscape buffers
 -  Active Travel Route (cycling and walking)
 -  Tree lined extension to Haybluff Drive
 -  Back Lane to be pedestrian / informal cycling / equestrian route only
 -  Back Lane Connection (with intermittent street trees)
 -  Proposed site access
 -  Green Spine (Linear Park)
 -  Focal Square
 -  Green open space (to southern edge)
 -  Opportunities for Swales
 -  Opportunities for SuDS
 -  Lanes / mews / shared surface routes
 -  Views to green / open space
 -  Screened / Filtered Views
 -  Opportunities for strong frontage



Proposed Site Layout

This page illustrates our proposed site layout with the following pages describing the various design strategies that underpin the functionality of the family focussed neighbourhood we seek to create.



Pedestrian & Cycling Connections

The proposed neighbourhood is centred around strong pedestrian and cyclist connectivity with the wider context area.

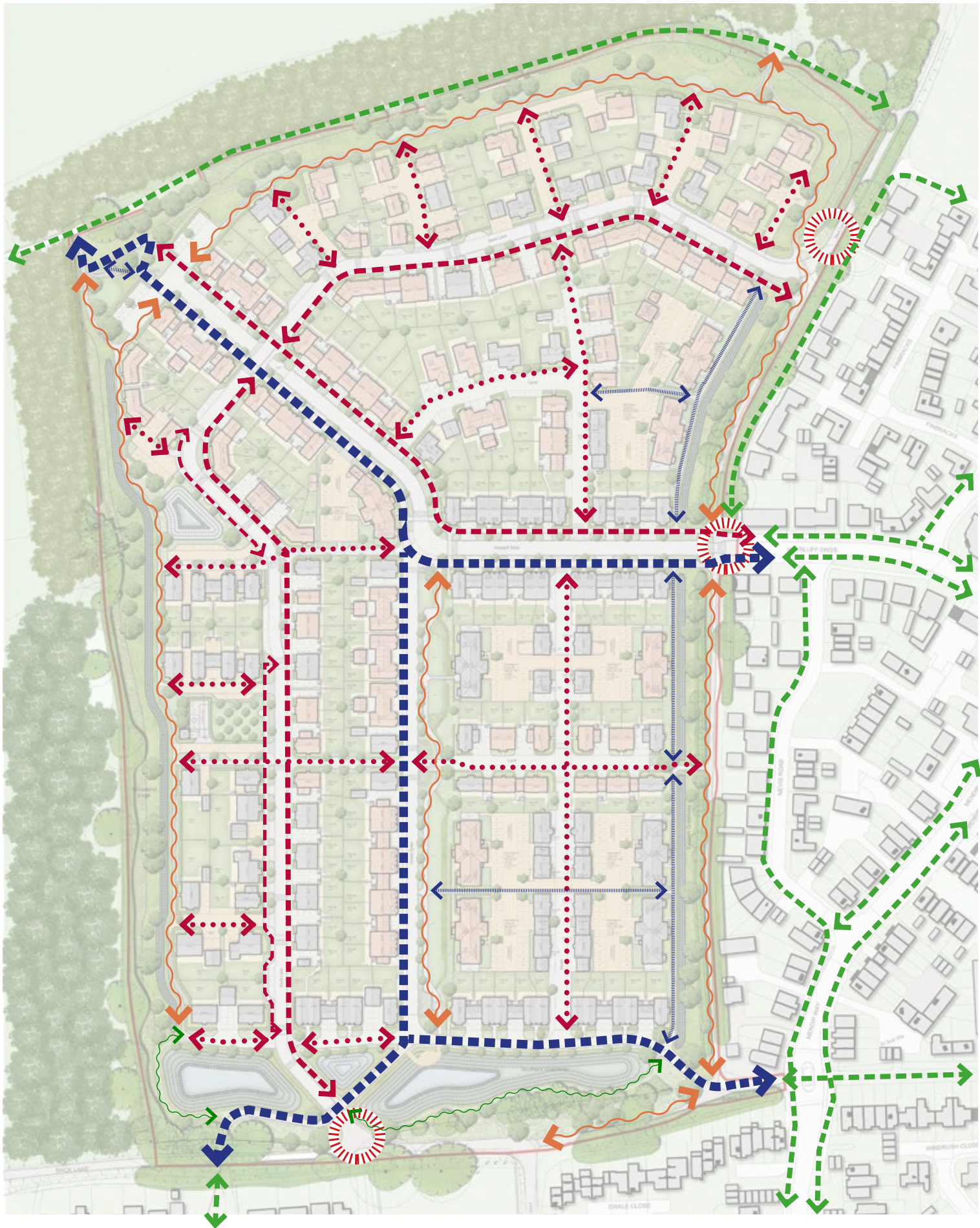
A dedicated shared 3m wide pedestrian/cycle route connects Haybluff Drive with the north-west corner of the site with this active travel route extending south down the Green Spine and connecting with Botany Bay Lane and Orwell Avenue.

Pedestrian footways are provided along the route which connects Back Lane together, with these 2m wide footways connecting with 3m wide pedestrian only links that connect with the main active travel routes. Shared surface streets, lanes and mews incorporate pedestrian comfort zones and knit the neighbourhood together.

A leisure route is provided to the perimeter of the neighbourhood, on all four sides, including the re-purposed section of Back Lane.

KEY:

-  Access points
-  Existing PRow / pedestrian connections
-  Active Travel route - Combined cycling and walking route (combined footway on streets / shared surface)
-  Active Travel route - Pedestrian walking routes (footways on streets)
-  Active Travel route - Pedestrian walking and informal cycling routes (shared surface/pedestrian only connections)
-  Active Travel route - Leisure route (including routes for horses along the re-purposed section of Back Lane)
-  Active Travel route - Pedestrian only footpaths / routes within development parcels
-  Mown path



Vehicular Access and Routes

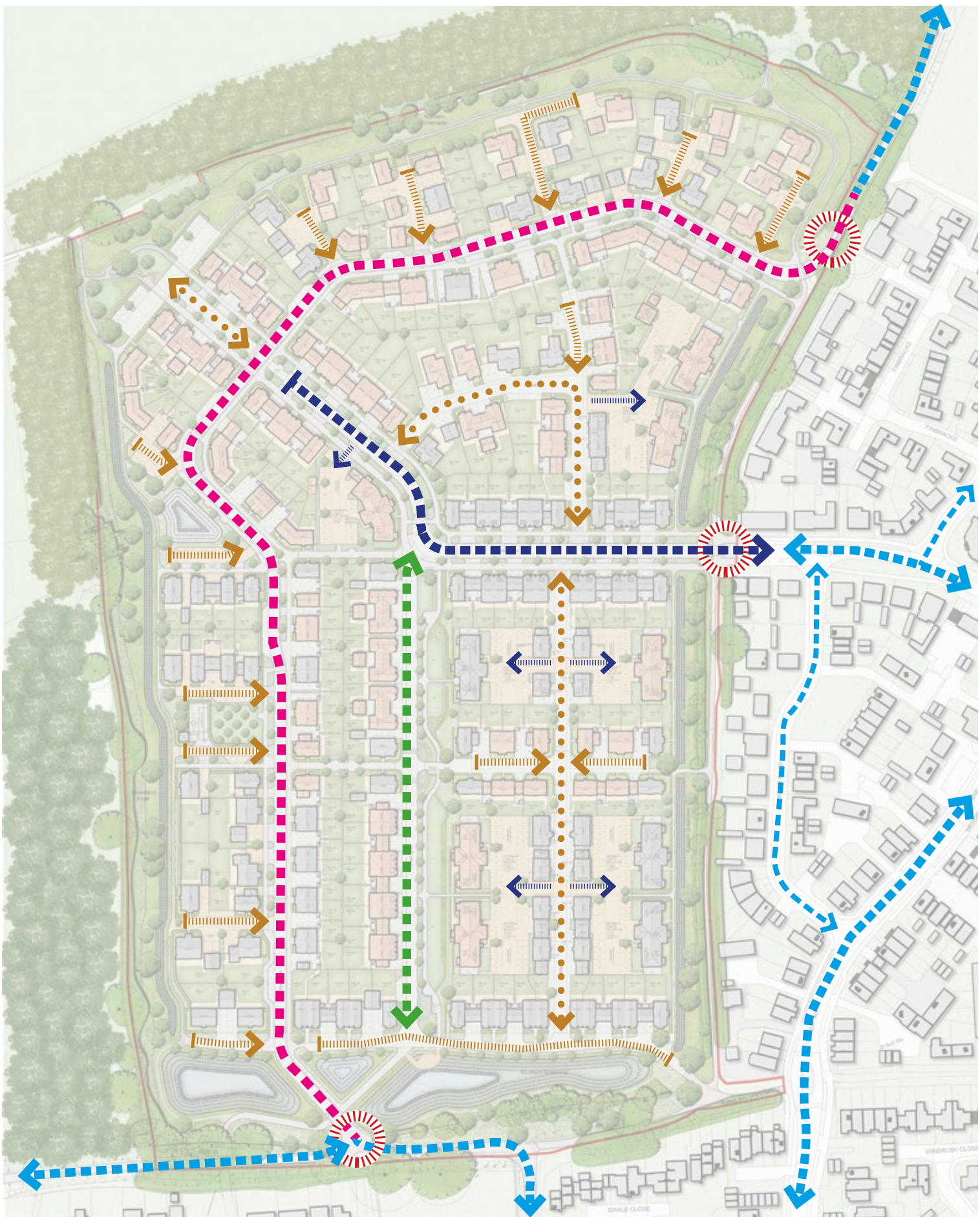
The layout comprises two main vehicular circulation routes; one extending directly from Haybluff Drive with the other connecting Back Lane together. Both of these routes are connected by an emergency access only point.

A new junction is to be formed to the south of the scheme leading from Calder Way and includes a pedestrian/cyclist connection with Orwell Avenue.

The remainder of the neighbourhood comprises low traffic, low speed, pedestrian priority shared surface streets, lanes and mews which serve individual homes and car parking courtyards associated with flat blocks.

KEY:

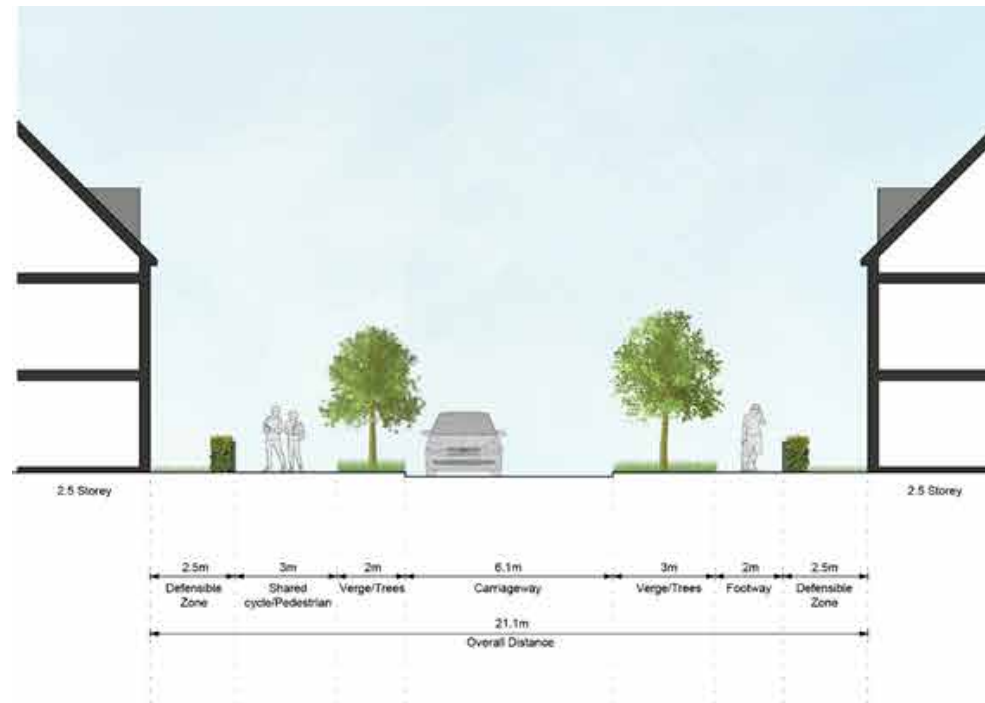
-  Access points
-  Existing road network
-  Access road (main route) - Haybluff Drive
-  Access road (main route) - Back Lane Connection
-  Street (secondary route) - Green Spine
-  Street (tertiary route) - Shared Surface
-  Lane / Mews / Private drive (tertiary route)
-  Parking court access



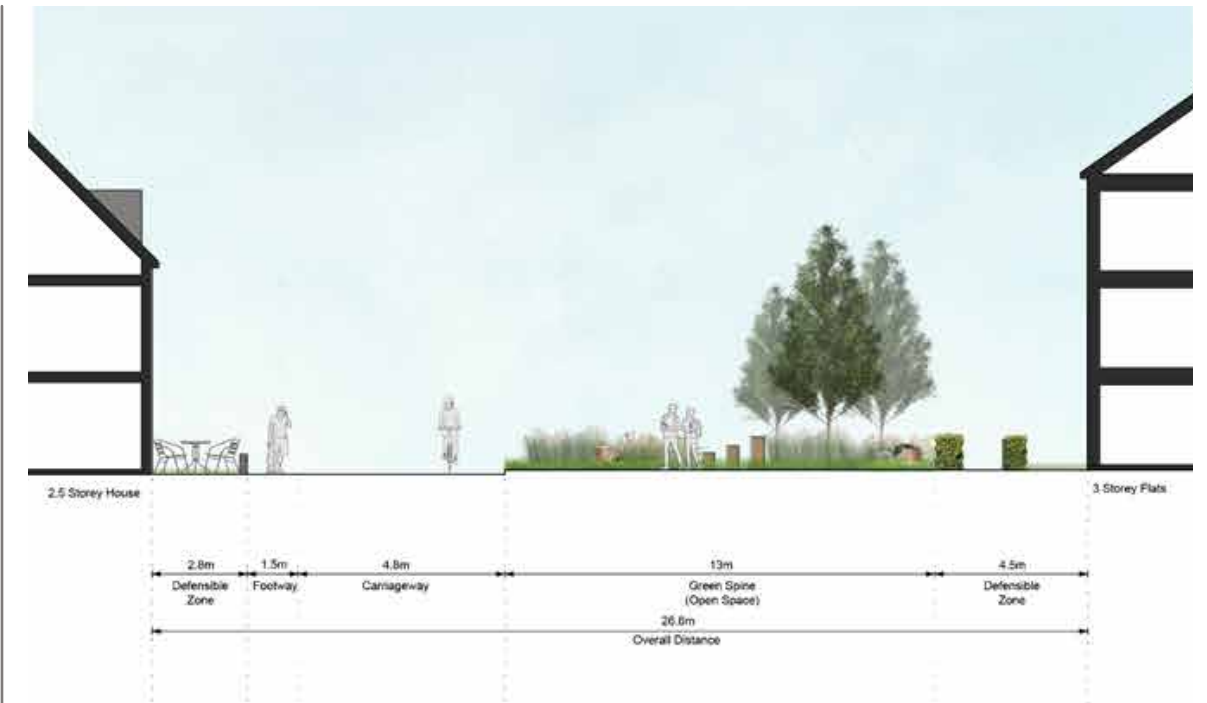
Street Typologies

A limited number of street typologies inform the hierarchy and character of the layout and are illustrated on the following pages and are as follows:

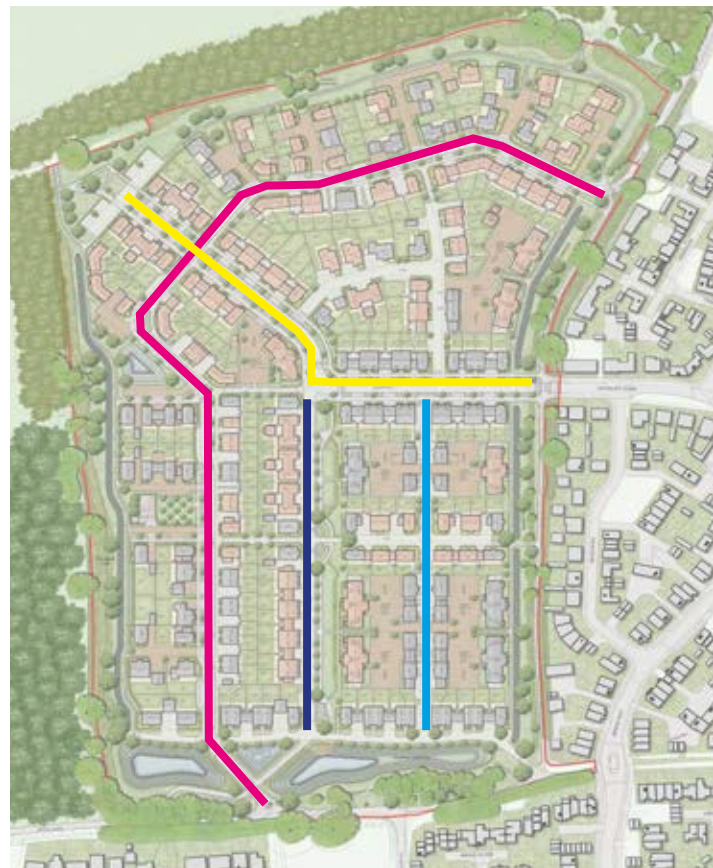
- Type 1 : Haybluff Drive
- Type 2 : Green Spine
- Type 3 : Back Lane Connection
- Type 4: Lane



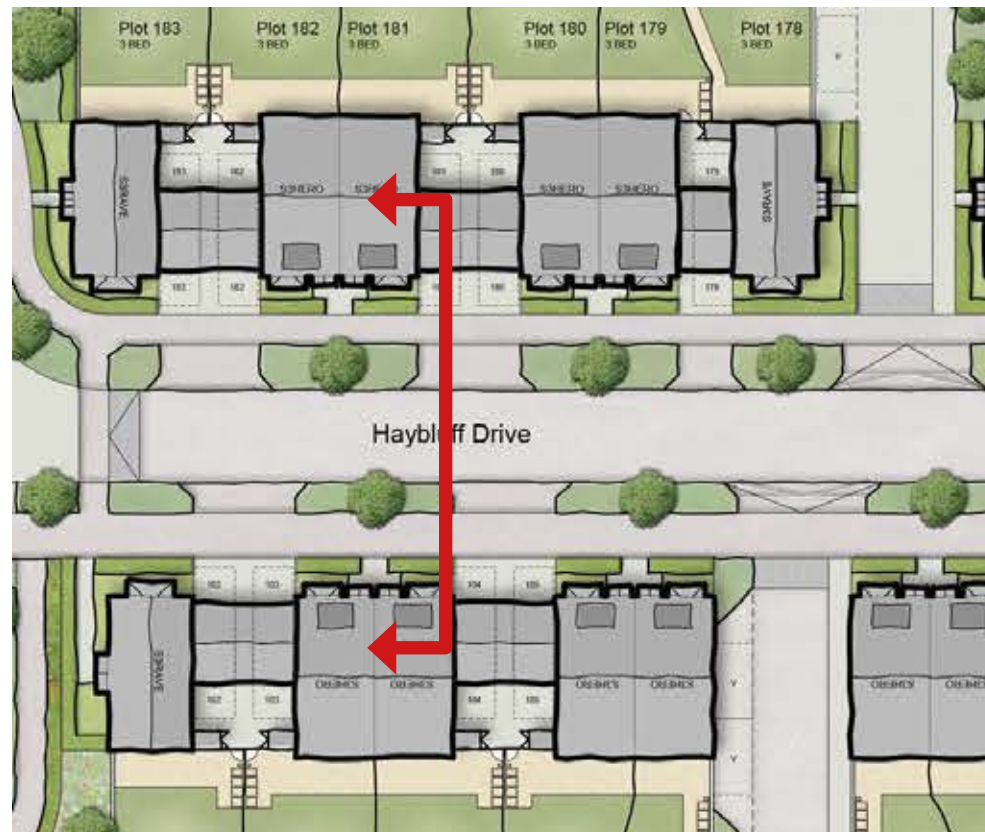
Street Type 1 - Haybluff Drive



Street Type 2 - Green Spine

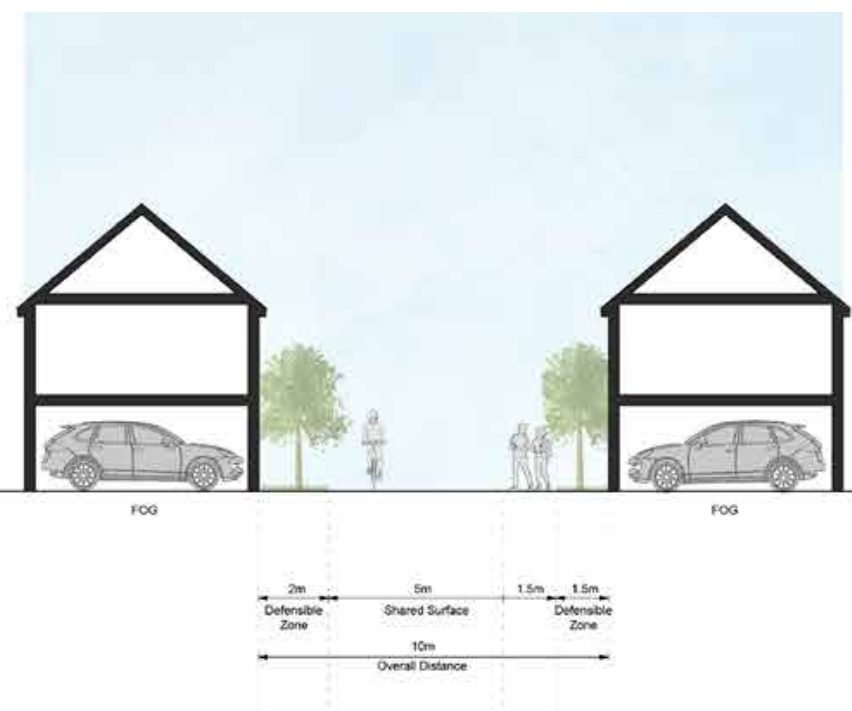


- Back Lane Connection
- Haybluff Drive
- Lane
- Green Spine





Street Type 3 - Back Lane Connection



Street Type 4 - Lane



Wayfinding, Markers and Transition

The established landscape structure of hedgerows and mature trees, in particular those to the perimeter of the site, provide a valuable framework that informs the structure of the site layout. Routes have been organised so that views are maximised to green space with existing mature trees terminating views along vistas that establishes, in part, the masterplan strategy.

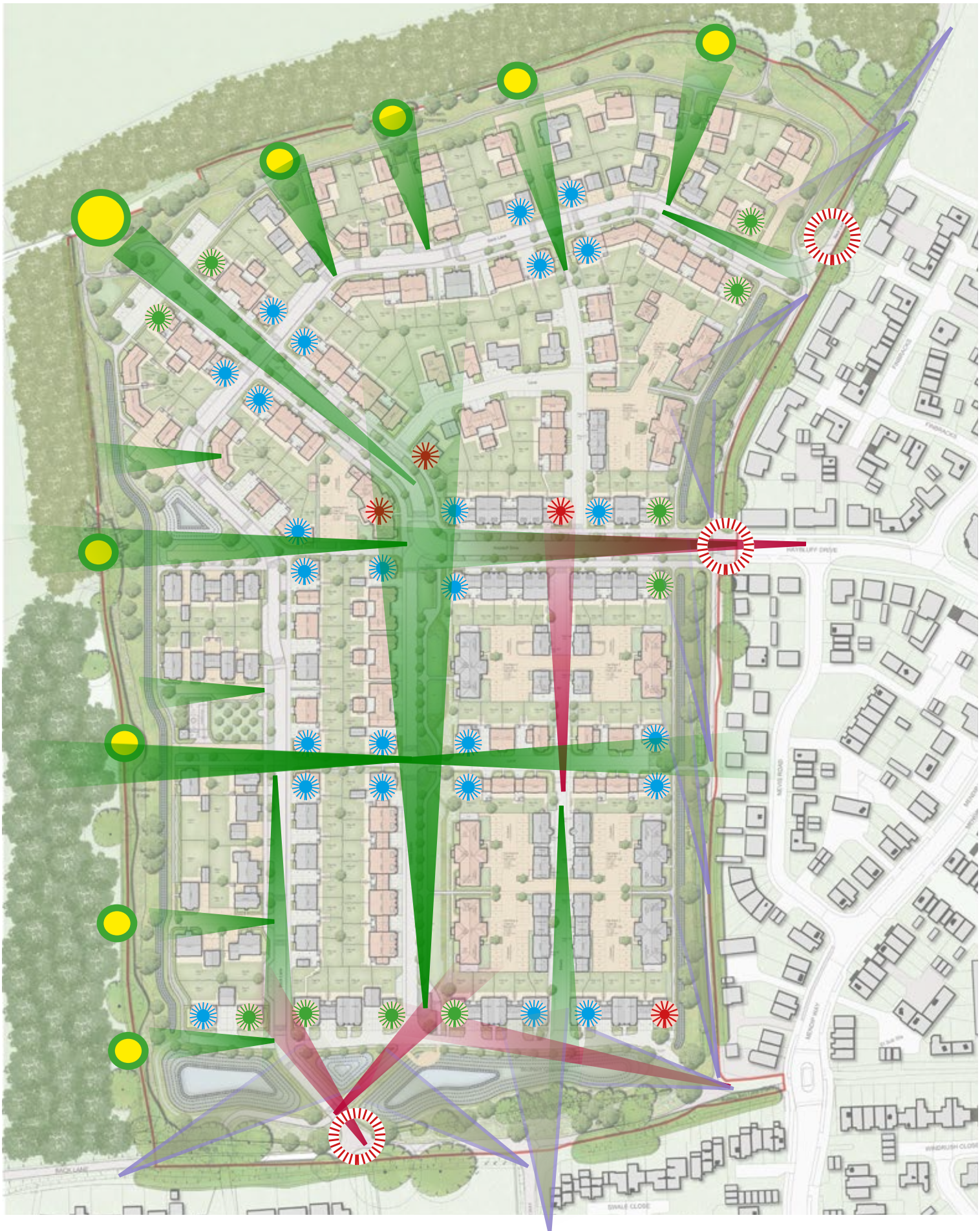
The route along Haybluff Drive and other east-west and north-south orientated routes allow for clear or glimpsed views to the existing perimeter landscape with key buildings being strategically located to either terminate vistas or frame key open spaces such as the Southern Greenway, the Eastern Greenway and the Green Spine.

Buildings with slight variance to the main materials palette act as wayfinding markers throughout the neighbourhood at transition points.

The block structure to the south-east is grid-like in layout in response to the edge of town / suburban character of Great Ahsby, with the parcel structure becoming freer and increasingly organic as the layout progresses towards the meandering rural edge, in particular towards the north of the site in response to the village characteristics at Graveley and Weston.

KEY:

-  Access points
-  View to retained trees along routes
-  View of green open space / focal tree
-  Gateway building(s)
-  Key view to transition / marker / space
-  Focal building
-  Transition / Marker building(s)
-  Filtered view



Character Areas

The proposed character areas are split into six distinct, yet overlapping, character areas. Each zone is derived from its' specific relationship to the existing or proposed landscape context and local vernacular influences from the surrounding context; notably at Old Stevenage, Graveley and Weston.

The following pages describe the qualities of the individual character areas including information on street typology, frontage arrangement, materiality, detailing and the context buildings and landscape which have influenced each character area.

- KEY:
- Area 1: Woodland / Rural Edge
 - Area 2: Southern Greenway
 - Area 3: Eastern Greenway
 - Area 4: Green Spine
 - Area 5: Haybluff Drive
 - Area 6: Transition areas (lanes and mews)



Character Area Synopsis

Area 1: Woodland / Rural Edge



Existing landscape:

Round Wood, Existing woodland, Feature Oak Tree

Context building influences:

Graveley, Weston

Street typology:

Back Lane Connection and Lane

Storey heights:

2 storeys with 2.5 storeys at some marker locations

Frontage arrangement:

Regularly broken and organic frontage edge running parallel with the existing trees
A mix of hedges and low shrub planting to front gardens
Simple geometric built form subtle porches denoting entrances
A varied mix of façade materials and variety in roof ridge direction running both parallel and at ninety degrees to the street
Marker plots with bays or subtle change in materiality form the main palette at key markers to routes / pedestrian connections

Materiality:

Walls: A mix of red multi-toned brick and tile hanging / render at upper levels
Roofs: A mix of clay plain tiles and slate.

Area 2: Southern Greenway



Existing and proposed landscape:

Existing tree line the southern boundary.
Proposed SuDS basins of note and informs character

Context building influences:

Great Ashby, Old Stevenage

Street typology:

Green Spine

Frontage arrangement:

Strong frontages creating framing to the Southern Greenway open space
Estate railings / hedging clearly define street level public realm
Simple and formal geometry to houses.
Bay windows and simple brickwork detailing articulate the facade with rigorous/controlled placement of fenestration
Brick detail at eaves and to windows provide uniform yet varied interest

Materiality:

Walls: Single type red multi-toned brick
Roof: Slate

Area 3: Eastern Greenway



Existing and proposed landscape:

Existing hedgerow and trees to Back Lane (which are to be retained)
Proposed swales and landscaping

Context building influences:

Great Ashby, Old Stevenage

Street typology:

Lane (where it connects)

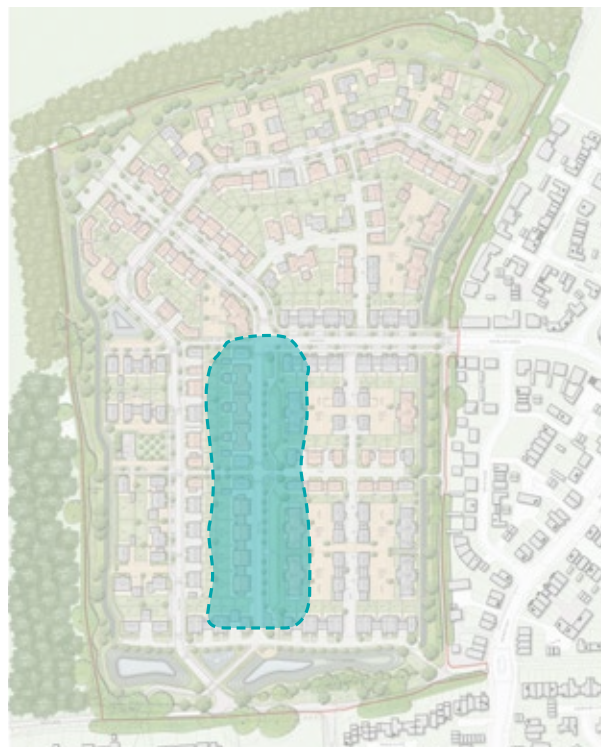
Frontage arrangement:

Strong frontages framing to the Eastern Greenway edge
Estate railings / hedging clearly define street level public realm
Simple and formal geometry to flat blocks
Simple brickwork detailing articulate the facade with rigorous/controlled placement of fenestration
Brick detail at eaves and to windows provide uniform yet varied interest

Materiality:

Walls: Two types of red multi-toned brick
Roof: Red clay plain tiles and slate to provide further variety between flat blocks

Area 4: Green Spine



Proposed landscape:

Proposed Linear Park to the Green Spine Route

Context building influences:

Great Ashby, Old Stevenage, Graveley

Street typology:

Green Spine

Frontage arrangement:

Strong, yet varied, frontages framing either side of the Green Spine route
Estate railings / hedging / low brick walls clearly define street level public realm
Simple and formal geometry to both houses and flat blocks
A variety of roof types creates interest to the framing of the route
Simple brickwork detailing articulate the facade with rigorous/controlled placement of fenestration
Brick detail at eaves and to windows provide uniform yet varied interest

Materiality:

Walls: Tow types of red multi-toned brick
Roof: Red clay plain tiles and slate to provide further variety to houses and flat blocks

Area 5: Haybluff Drive



Existing and Proposed landscape:

Haybluff Drive, Feature Oak Tree

Context building influences:

Great Ashby, Old Stevenage, Graveley

Street typology:

Haybluff Drive, Green Spine

Frontage arrangement:

Strong, yet varied, frontages framing the street
Estate railings / hedging clearly define street level public realm
Simple and formal geometry to both houses and flat blocks
Regular roof forms with gables acting as book-ends
Simple brickwork detailing articulate the facade

Materiality:

Walls: Tow types of red multi-toned brick
Roof: Red clay plain tiles and slate to provide further variety to houses and flat blocks

Area 6: Transition areas



Proposed landscape:

Shared surface streets and pedestrian only connections

Context building influences:

Old Stevenage, Great Ashby, Graveley, Weston

Street typology:

Lane

Frontage arrangement:

Strong frontages with a variety of approaches from the regular organisation of buildings to the organic
Hedges and low shrub planting to front gardens and incidental planting
Simple geometry to built form with subtle porches denoting entrances
A mix of façade materials and a variety of roof ridges running both parallel and at ninety degrees to the lane

Materiality:

Walls: A mix of red multi-toned brick and tile hanging / render at upper levels
Roofs: A mix of clay plain tiles and slate.

Use and Residential Typologies

The neighbourhood comprises houses, coach houses and flats, with houses being the predominant residential typology. Detached and semi detached homes all have their own front entrances directly off the street, as do the coach houses.

Flat blocks will have their own individual communal entrance off the street which serves the individual homes; these buildings also benefit from a separate entrance to the rear to the parking court which includes dedicated secure cycle and refuse storage embedded into the design of the layout. Wheelchair accessible homes have their own individual front door directly from the car parking courtyard.

- Application Boundary
- Houses
- Apartment Buildings
- Coach House



Mix of Homes

A broad mix of homes and dwelling typologies are to be provided across the neighbourhood from 1 and 2 bedroom flats and coach houses, to 2, 3, 4 and 5 bedroom houses.

All of the homes are in close proximity to the proposed open spaces within the site.

- Application Boundary
- 1 Bedroom Home
- 1 Bedroom Home at Ground Floor Level
- 1 Bedroom Wheelchair Home at Ground Floor Level
- 2 Bedroom Home
- 2 Bedroom Wheelchair Home at Ground Floor Level
- 3 Bedroom Home
- 4 Bedroom Home
- 4 Bedroom Wheelchair Home
- 5 Bedroom Home

